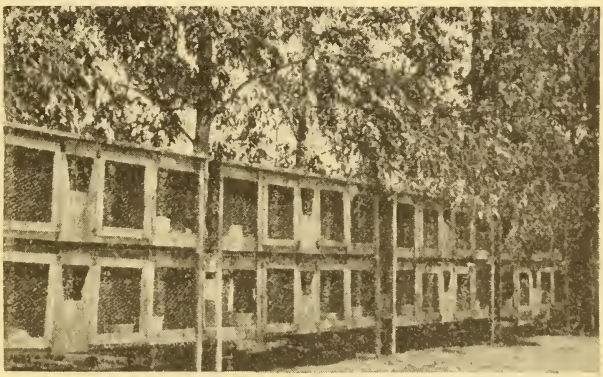
Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

RABBIT-HOUSE CONSTRUCTION



LEAFLET NUMBER 15

Issued December, 1927; Revised June, 1930

RABBIT-HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

Prepared by Bureau of Biological Survey and Bureau of Public Roads
United States Department of Agriculture

THE ESSENTIALS to be considered in determining the kind of house to build for rabbits depend upon location, climate, extent of the business, and the money to be invested. In building a rabbitry one must keep in mind construction and equipment that will facilitate handling the rabbits with a minimum of manual labor. The care exercised in feeding, breeding, and handling the rabbits, as well as in cleaning the hutches and keeping the house sanitary, is of the utmost importance.

None of the numerous designs and styles of rabbit hutches at present in use has yet proved to be entirely satisfactory in every detail. Hutches and nest boxes require frequent cleaning and spraying to keep them free from vermin and to protect the health of the animals. The construction, therefore, should be as simple as possible, with ample provision for light and fresh air. Both the comfort of the animals and the convenience of the caretaker should be kept in mind in planning construction.

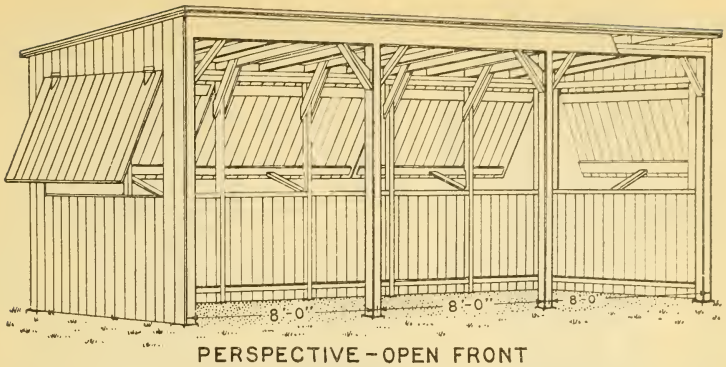
Rabbit hutches should have about 10 or 12 square feet of floor space. The standard hutch is 4 feet long, 2½ feet deep, and 2 feet high. To economize in space and facilitate feeding and handling, the hutches are frequently built two tiers high. Rabbits are more easily cared for and less likely to become diseased in well-built hutches of the size recommended than in poorly built temporary ones, which become foul and unwholesome.

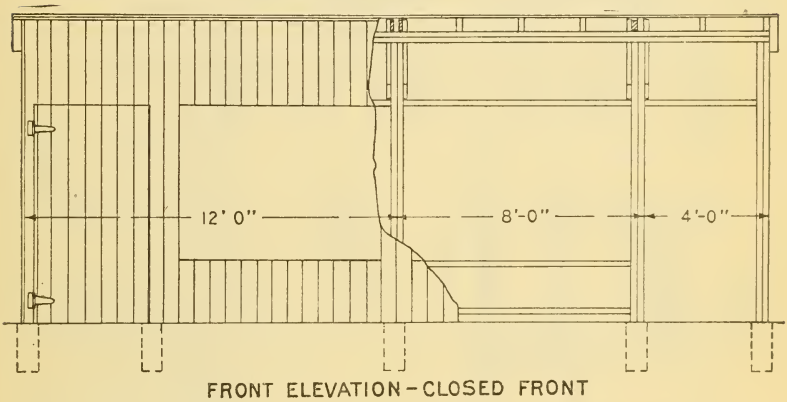
The various kinds of hutches differ somewhat in details but the same general principles of construction are involved. All have wire-mesh, metal, or slat-wood floors. A floor of hardware cloth, or a metal floor that permits the droppings to fall to the ground, is satisfactory. The installation of a V-shaped hayrack and a drawer grain trough lessens the labor of feeding and prevents waste. Patents have been issued on certain types of drawer grain troughs, and a collapsible metal rabbit hutch containing the rack and drawer features has recently appeared on the market.

A knockdown type of nest box is preferable because it facilitates cleaning and disinfecting. To prevent the rabbits from gnawing the wood, strips of tin or galvanized iron may be tacked on the exposed edges of the nest box. A nest box with a side entrance is preferable to one with an end opening, because there is less likelihood that the doe when entering the box will step on the young.

Rabbits grow and develop faster in large pens than in breeding hutches. In the large pens the young stock receive ample sunlight and have plenty of room to exercise. Developing pens assist materially in maintaining vitality in the stock and are a valuable adjunct to any rabbitry.

Construction details for the rabbit house are shown on page 3, for the hutches on pages 4 and 5, for the rabbit nest box on page 6, and for the developing pen on page 7. Bills of materials for the various structures are listed on page 8.





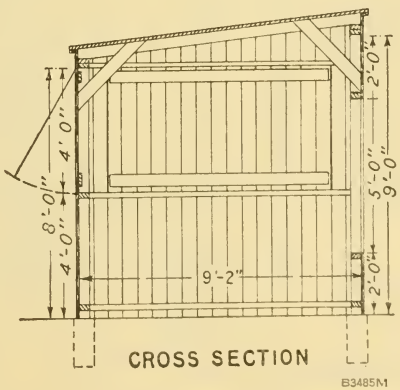


FIGURE 1.—Construction details of a rabbit house

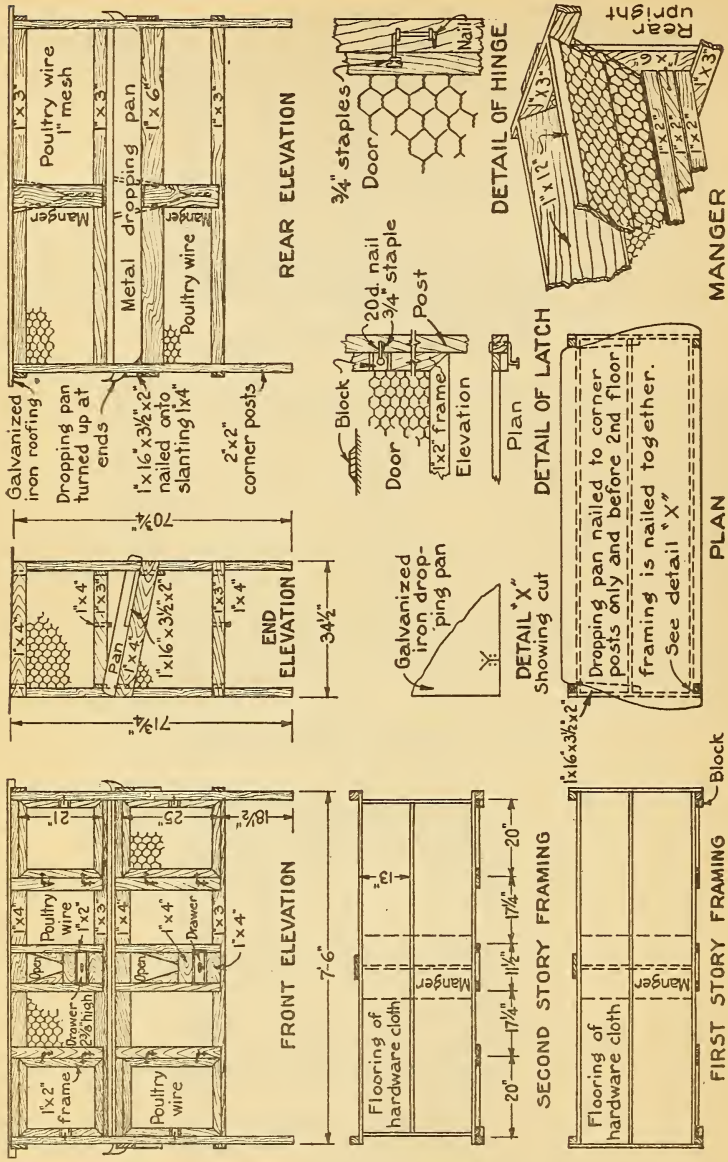


FIGURE 2.—Construction details of a double-tier rabbit hutch

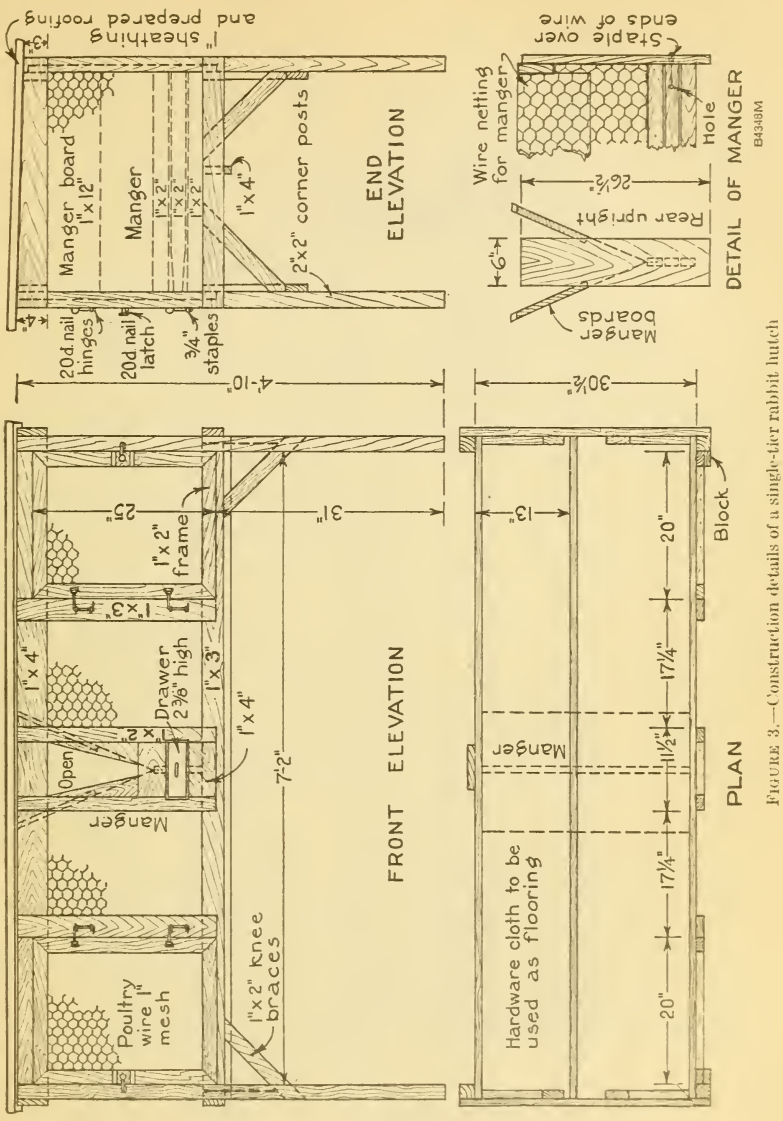


FIGURE 3.—Construction details of a single-tier rabbit hutch

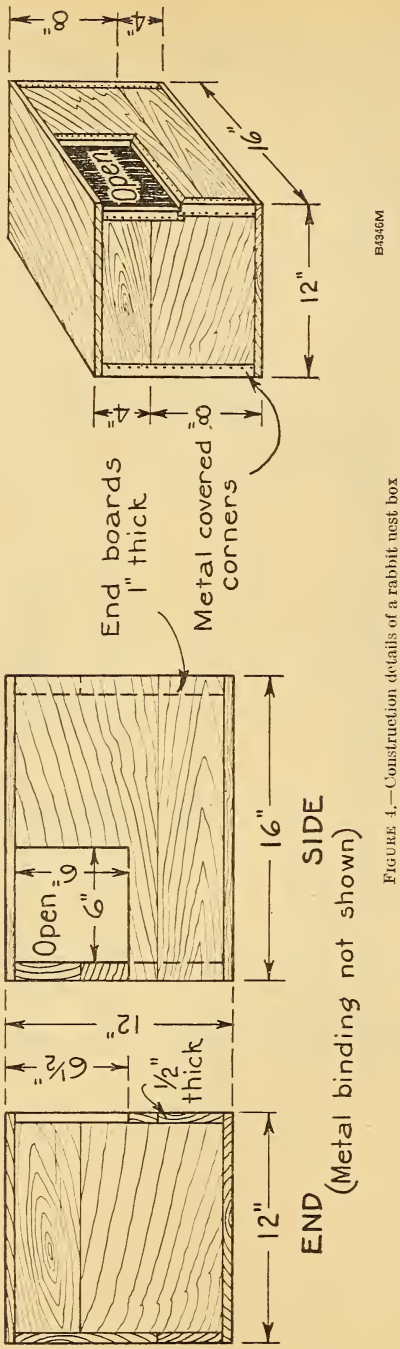


FIGURE 4.—Construction details of a rabbit nest box

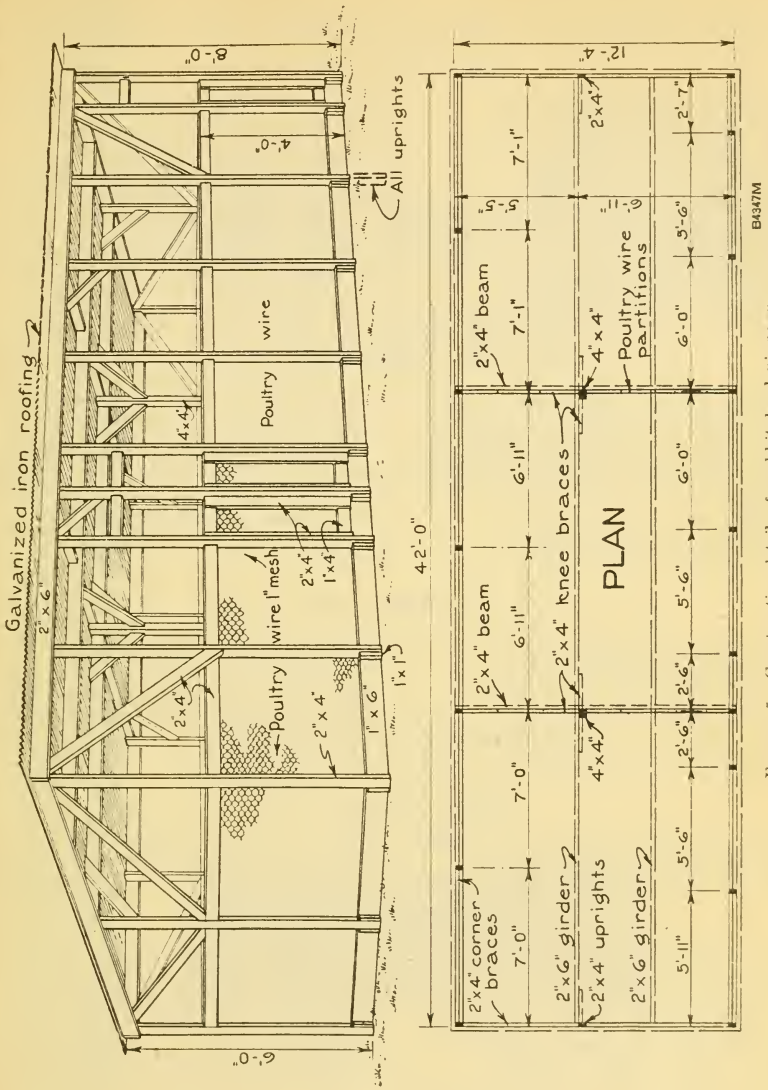


FIGURE 5.—Construction details of a rabbit developing pen

Bills of Materials

Rabbit House (Fig. 1)

¼ cubic yard concrete for post footings.
8 2 by 4 inches by 10 feet (posts).
9 2 by 4 inches by 8 feet (posts).
18 2 by 4 inches by 8 feet (plates and girts).
6 2 by 4 inches by 10 feet (end girts).
13 2 by 4 inches by 10 feet (rafters).
4 1 by 6 inches by 12 feet (braces).
60 1 by 6 inches by 8 feet (tongued-and-grooved sheathing—rear).
40 1 by 6 inches by 10 feet (tongued-and-grooved sheathing—ends).
2 1 by 8 inches by 12 feet (rear facia).
280 feet board measure roof sheathing.
70 linear feet 1 by 1 inch strip for under edge of roof.
Prepared roofing for 260 square feet area.
6 pairs 6-inch T hinges.
For open-front shelter add the following:
1 2 by 4 inches by 18 feet (braces).
2 1 by 8 inches by 12 feet (facia).
14 1 by 4 inches by 10 feet (post casings).
For closed shelter add the following (omit the three items under open front):
2 2 by 4 inches by 10 feet (posts).
7 2 by 4 inches by 8 feet (girts).
36 1 by 6 inches by 10 feet (tongued-and-grooved sheathing).
2 1 by 6 inches by 10 feet (braces).
2 pairs 6-inch T hinges.

Double-Tier Rabbit Hutch (Fig. 2)

4 2 by 2 inches by 6 feet (posts).
6 1 by 3 inches by 8 feet (lower and upper frames).
2 1 by 4 inches by 8 feet (lower and upper frames).
1 1 by 6 inches by 8 feet (dropping-pan frame).
2 1 by 4 inches by 8 feet (dropping-pan frames).
1 filler 1 by 4 inches by 3 feet (makes 2 fillers under ends of pan 1 by 16 inches by 3½ inches by 2 inches).
2 1 by 4 inches by 8 feet (roof frame).
1 1 by 3 inches by 8 feet (roof frame).
3 1 by 2 inches by 12 feet (doors).
1 1 by 3 inches by 10 feet (jambs).
1 1 by 2 inches by 10 feet (mangers).
1 1 by 6 inches by 4 feet (mangers).
1 1 by 12 inches by 12 feet (mangers).
3 1 by 2 inches by 6 feet (mangers).
6 linear feet 1-inch-mesh poultry wire, 4 feet wide.
20 pieces 1-inch-mesh poultry wire, 2 feet wide.
2 pieces ½-inch-mesh hardware cloth, 7 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 6 inches.
1 piece 20-gage galvanized iron, 3 by 9 feet.
1 piece 16-gage galvanized iron, 3 feet 4 inches by 8 feet.

Single-Tier Rabbit Hutch (Fig. 3)

4 2 by 2 inches by 5 feet (posts).
2 1 by 2 inches by 6 feet (knee braces).
3 1 by 3 inches by 8 feet (bottom frame).
1 1 by 4 inches by 8 feet (bottom frame).
3 1 by 4 inches by 8 feet (top frame).
1 1 by 3 inches by 8 feet (top frame).
8 ⅞ by 5½ inches by 8 feet (tongued-and-grooved sheathing).
2 1 by 2 inches by 8 feet (doors).
1 1 by 3 inches by 6 feet (jambs).
1 1 by 2 inches by 12 feet (manger).
1 1 by 6 inches by 4 feet (manger).
1 1 by 12 inches by 6 feet (manger).
27 linear feet 1-inch-mesh poultry wire 2 feet wide.
1 piece ½-inch-mesh hardware cloth, 2 feet 6 inches by 7 feet 6 inches.
Roll roofing, 3 by 8 feet.

Rabbit Nest Box (Fig. 4)

2 ½ by 12 inches by 16 inches (top and bottom).
2 ½ by 7½ inches by 16 inches (sides).
2 ½ by 3½ inches by 16 inches (sides).
2 1 by 7½ inches by 11 inches (ends).
2 1 by 3½ inches by 11 inches (ends).
5 linear feet 20-gage metal ribbon 1½ inches wide.

Rabbit Developing Pen (Fig. 5)

10 2 by 4 inches by 10 feet (uprights).
9 2 by 4 inches by 8 feet (uprights).
2 4 by 4 inches by 10 feet (uprights).
4 2 by 4 inches by 10 feet (knee braces).
9 2 by 4 inches by 8 feet (corner braces and headers).
12 2 by 6 inches by 14 feet (roof framing).
2 2 by 6 inches by 12 feet (roof framing).
2 2 by 4 inches by 12 feet (roof framing).
8 2 by 4 inches by 14 feet (rails).
12 1 by 6 inches by 14 feet (baseboards and gates).
3 2 by 4 inches by 8 feet (gates).
3 1 by 4 inches by 6 feet (gates).
2 2 by 4 inches by 14 feet (partitions).
1 1 by 6 inches by 14 feet (partition).
140 linear feet 1-inch-mesh poultry wire, 4 feet wide.
3 pairs 4-inch strap hinges.
3 fasteners for gates.
22 sheets 26-gage galvanized metal roofing, 2½-inch corrugations, 26 inches by 6 feet.
22 sheets same material 8 feet long.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1930

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. - - - - Price 5 cents